CHAPTER 5

MAIL PROCESSING PROCEDURES

This chapter describes the processing of outgoing official mail through the collection, postmarking, sorting, pouching, sacking, and traying. You will recognize the importance of monitoring official mail operations in detecting abuse and determining cost saving methods that should be implemented. You will learn the proper addressing format for official mail. At the end of this chapter, you should understand how to prepare the prepaid postage report. You will be given guidance on conducting inspections and the significance of maintaining proper security of registered mail and postal effects.

PROCESSING OFFICIAL MAIL

At the end of each day you should collect, consolidate, classify, and dispatch outgoing official mail to the local post office or military post office (MPO) for further processing.

COLLECTION

Official mail must not be deposited in U.S. Postal Service (USPS) collection boxes. If official mail is found in mail collection boxes, postal personnel will return official mail to the local Official Mail Consolidation Office (OMCO) for further disposition. The OMCO returns the official mail to the office personnel who put the mail in the USPS mail collection box. The OMCO should then decide if those office personnel dealing with official mail require further training in official mail procedures. As the host command official mail manager (OMM), you should explain to office personnel the importance of collecting official mail from unit mail orderlies, clerks, or other official mail distribution centers.

Q1. Official mail may be deposited in USPS collection boxes. (T/F)

POSTMARKING

Postmark official mail along with ordinary outgoing mail. Do not postmark mail deposited after the last scheduled collection until the following day. Postmark missent official mail on the back to show the date received before dispatching it to its final destination.

Q2. You should not postmark mail deposited after the last scheduled collection until the following day. (T/F)

SORTING

Official mail is sorted, bundled, and dispatched with ordinary outgoing mail. Handle official mail the same as ordinary outgoing mail, provided the official mail has no registered mail or special services added. Registered mail is always handled with more security than ordinary mail.

Incorrect sorting or bagging of mail will result in mail delays. Strict adherence to proper procedures is of the utmost importance and will help prevent unnecessary mail delays. Place certified mail and balloting materials on top of working letter bundles. Never place this mail in firm or unit direct letter bundles.

Military and civilian employees are responsible for depositing personal mail at a USPS branch office or an authorized USPS mail receptacle. Outgoing personal mail found in an official mail receptacle will be returned to the originator for proper disposition.

Q3. Official mail should never be sorted, bundled, and dispatched with ordinary outgoing mail. (T/F)

Q4. Personal mail found in an official mail receptacle should be dispatched with the official mail. (T/F)

POUCHING, SACKING, OR TRAYING OUTGOING OFFICIAL MAIL

A pouch is a mailbag that is identified by a leather strap and locking device on the neck of the pouch. The leather strap and locking device are used to secure the pouch. The pouch is commonly used for First-Class Mail and registered mail. Use the special blue and orange pouch for Express Mail service.

A sack is a bag used to transport nonpreferential Periodicals, Standard Mail (A) and Standard Mail (B). It is closed with a draw cord and fastener.

A tray is used for flats or letters, depending on the tray dimensions.

Outgoing official mail is pouched, sacked, or tray as ordinary outgoing mail before any of the mail is dispatched. All mail must be pouched, sacked, or trayed by classification and service, considering priorities, transportation policies, and cost. All mail centers and military post offices (MPOs) will use the following general guidelines:

- Dispatch priority mail in orange air priority parcel pouches and First-Class letter mail in letter trays or orange air number 1 or 2 pouches.
- Dispatching activities must not commingle First-Class Mail or Priority Mail with Standard Mail (A), Standard Mail (B), or other classes of mail.
- Dispatch directory service letter mail with other letter mail.
- Items that could possibly damage mailbags or other mail may not be pouched or sacked, but will be dispatched as outside pieces (OSPs).

Place all mail in sacks, pouches, or trays, then properly label and tag them. When labeled and tagged correctly, the least amount of mail delay can be expected if the mail is handled correctly. Since slide labels and tags are the only external identifiers of end destinations for mail contained in the pouch or sack, be careful to label all mail correctly before dispatching.

Q5. A pouch is a mailbag identified by what characteristics?

MONITORING OFFICIAL MAIL

Monitoring your official mail operations is a necessary requirement. By doing this, it should save you time and problems. You may even learn new ways to save the Navy money. If you learn new ways of official mail-management cost-saving practices, share them with other official mail managers. Observe your official mail operations to detect abuse of the program. The following suggestions are some of the ways you can monitor the Official Mail Management Program:

- Randomly survey outgoing official mail by checking for proper preparation, address format, address application, and proper postage and fees applied
- Ensure registered, certified, and/or official mail/material with Return Receipts complies with current instructions. Inspection may include opening of official material/mail to determine the contents
- Return official mail/material in noncompliance with existing regulations to the originating command/activity
- Use the Official Mail Manager's Inspection Checklist, found in OPNAV Instruction 5218.7, as a guide to help you monitor your official mail program

The official mail manager or assistant official mail manager (AOMM) are the only persons authorized to open official material before the application of postage. The inner wrapper of classified material is never authorized to be opened. The OMM/AOMM will maintain a log to document anytime a piece of official material is opened for inspection purposes. The log will contain the following information:

1. Date
2. Full name of command/activity originating the material
3. Command to which material is addressed
4. Registered/Certified number, if applicable
5. Signature of OMM/AOMM who opened the material

ADDRESS FORMAT

To be compatible with USPS automation requirements, the Department of Defense (DOD) has directed that the delivery line include a street address or post office box for all official mail addresses located in areas served by USPS. In addition, except for invitations to social functions where handwritten addresses are prescribed by social custom, the delivery address on official mail will be typed or printed by mechanical means in upper case (capital) letters and contain no punctuation except for the hyphen in the ZIP+4 Code.

Commanders/commanding officers of activities located within the United States and its territories and possessions, except those having an MPO address or approved by Congress for closure, who have not done so already, will:

- Coordinate with local USPS officials to revise/reformat their official mailing address and those of their tenant commands

- Assign street addresses and/or numbers to all buildings to which USPS currently delivers mail
- Provide tenant activities and local USPS officials with new official addresses
- Provide new official mailing addresses (including tenant activities addresses) to CNO (N09B22) for inclusion in the Standard Navy Distribution List (SNDL)

Official mail addresses (both delivery and return) will be typed in uppercase letters, limited to five lines, formatted with a uniform left margin, and be limited to a maximum of 47 characters per line including spaces. The only authorized punctuation is the hyphen (-) in the ZIP+4 Code. Following is an example of an official mail address:

TITLE OF OFFICIAL IN CHARGE
OPTIONAL LINE
NAME OF ACTIVITY
DELIVERY ADDRESS
CITY STATE ZIP+4 CODE

The lines of an official mail address are discussed in the following paragraphs:

Title of Official in Charge —Navy correspondence will be addressed to the official in charge of the activity (such as Director, Commander, Commanding Officer, and so forth). When known, the action officer's name may be placed at the end of this line or an optional line may be used to identify a specific person or section within the activity.

Optional Line —This line may be used to direct mail to a specific person or section when the name of the activity line and the title of official in charge line do not adequately identify the addressee.

Name of Activity —Although the long title will still appear in the Standard Navy Distribution List (SNDL), for addressing purposes, the short title Plain Language Address (PLA), less city and state, will be used. For example, the activity line for Commander, Naval Supply Systems Command, will be addressed "COMNAVSUPSYSCOM."

Delivery Address—This line, except for ships, will consist of either a street address, post office box number, postal service center number, and box number or unit number.

Examples

Street Address: 1775 JOHN PAUL JONES BLVD
Post Office Box Number: PO BOX 405
Postal Service Center Number: 4 PSC 467 BOX 291
Unit Number: UNIT 30001
Unit Number with Box Number: UNIT 62001 BOX 426

City, State, ZIP+4 Code —The post office (city), state and ZIP+4 will appear in that order on the bottom line of the address. Except for MPO addresses, the standard two-letter abbreviation will be used for the state. In the case of MPO addresses, APO or FPO is used instead of the city and "AE" (Armed Forces Europe), "AA" (Armed Forces Americas), or "AP" Armed Forces Pacific) rather than the state.

Examples

Civilian Post Office Address: NORFOLK VA 23511-5218
Military Post Office Address: FPO AE 09501-4665
FPO AA 34093-2329
FPO AP 96349-1100

Q6. The delivery address on official mail will be typed or printed by mechanical means with what exception?

Q7. Official mail addresses are limited to how many lines?

Q8. In the case of MPO addresses, what acronyms are used in place of the state?

PREPAID POSTAGE REPORT

Semiannually, 1 October through 31 March and 1 April through 30 September, all commands having direct financial dealings with USPS will report all official mail purchases to their major claimant using the *Navy Official Mail Management Instructions,* OPNAVINST 5218.7, chapter 2, paragraph C6.

Major claimants will consolidate the official mail purchase information pertaining to their claimancy into a single report and forward it to COMNAVSUPSYSCOM (SUP 54) to arrive by 15 May and 15 November of each year.

COMNAVSUPSYSCOM will consolidate the information received from the major claimants and forward a single Navy Prepaid Postage Report to the DOD Official Mail Manager.

In addition to the information required by OPNAVINST 5218.7, major claimants will add the following items to their prepaid postage report using the mail codes indicated in parenthesis:

- Funds Remaining on Postage Meters (2001). Report total funds remaining on postage meters.
- Funds Expended with Commercial Carriers (2002). Report funds expended for shipping material with commercial carriers (i.e., United Parcel Service, Federal Express) that previously would have been sent by mail.
- Support Provided to Other Claimants (2003). Report the total dollar value of support, by claimancy, provided to other commands.

INSPECTIONS

The OMM is also responsible for the inspection of official material/mail handling at all activities under his or her authority.

Official mail management regulations, policies, and procedures are generated by the *Navy Command Inspection Program,* SECNAVINST 5040.3.

Component headquarters, major commands (MACOMs), and intermediate commands must conduct internal headquarters OMM inspections at least once a year. Conduct inspections of subordinate installations and activities at least every 3 years. These inspections may be combined with other inspections and staff assistance visits.

Installation or equivalent OMMs will annually inspect all staff activities, subordinate activities, and tenant activities. These inspection reports will be made available for review during MACOM and Inspector General inspections and staff assistance visits. Staff, subordinate, and tenant activities must keep all previous inspection reports on file for a period of 3 years.

Q9. Upon completion of the OMM inspection, a copy should be filed and the previous year's inspection checklist disposed of (T/F)

CHECKLIST

You should use the applicable Official Mail Manager's Inspection Checklist, provided in OPNAVINST 5218.7, for inspections. Local reproduction is authorized. Be sure you understand the references shown at the end of each inspection item listed on the applicable form.

To control DOD official mail costs and prepare for inspections, all OMMs must do the following:

- Make sure official mail users know when and how to contact their OMM.
- Supervise mailing practices.
- Report any misuse of official mail to the commanding officer of the alleged violators.
- Set up controls on postal expenses to create a cost-effective mail management program.

Command OMMs are required to do the following:

- Keep their commanders informed of the effectiveness of the Official Mail Cost Control Program (OMCCP) and any problem areas.
- Supervise the command's OMCCP.
- Annually contact, provide assistance, guidance, and training. Discuss mailing requirements with activities within their jurisdiction that produce forms, publications, and periodicals. (Keep records of these discussions to make future inspections easier.)
- Inspect incoming mail at least once a week and report discrepancies to the originating command's OMM.
- Inspect outgoing mail at least once a week at the final preparation point (1) to decide who needs additional training and what policies and procedures need more emphasis and (2) to make sure outgoing official mail with discrepancies in preparation is returned for correction.
- Review spoiled postage meter tapes and establish procedures to reduce their occurrence and ensure proper disposition has been made.
- Analyze the use of commercial postage and use the results to make your official mail usage program more cost-effective.
- Coordinate with supporting supply and procurement activities to ensure postal-related items being procured such as envelopes, cards, and labels meet the following standards:
  - USPS regulations

  - *The Navy Official Mail Management Instructions,* OPNAVINST 5218.7
  - Your command's postal Standard Operating Procedures
- Know USPS account representatives and other appropriate USPS officials.
- When possible, belong to and attend meetings of the local USPS-sponsored Postal Customer Council. The OMM should start a Postal Customer Council if one does not exist in the area.

Q10. In what publication can you find the Official Mail Manager's Inspection Checklist?

SECURITY

Adequate security must be provided for official mail received from collection to delivery. Handle and treat all official registered mail as if it contained Secret material.

All personnel are responsible for preventing the theft, misuse, waste, or loss of commercial postage stamps. Secure postage stamps in locked containers such as safes, lockable file cabinets, lockable desk drawers, and locked rooms that only the custodian has access to.

Security of postage stamps and postage metering equipment is the responsibility of all personnel who work with or near official mail. Activities may establish additional controls as necessary at the local level.

Postage stamps and postage metering equipment will be given the best possible protection against loss or theft. The Official Mail Consolidation Office will maintain records reflecting the number and cost of postage stamps requisitioned, used, and remaining on hand. This procedure also prevents the unauthorized use of postage stamps.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we talked about mail processing procedures through the collection, postmarking, sorting, pouching, sacking, and traying of outgoing official mail. We discussed monitoring official mail operations, explained correct addressing format, and concluded the chapter by reemphasizing the need for adequate security. You should now realize the importance of monitoring your official mail operations. By monitoring each operation, you can avoid problems that can cost you time and money. Share learned cost-saving practices with others involved in official mail management. With the knowledge you gain in this chapter, you can detect and eliminate the abuse of the Official Mail Management Program.

ANSWERS TO EMBEDDED QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 5

A1. *False.*

A2. *True.*

A3. *False.*

A4. *False.*

A5. *Leather strap with locking device.*

A6. *Invitations to social functions where handwritten addresses are prescribed by social custom.*

A7. 5.

A8. *AE, AA, AP.*

A9. *False.*

A10. *OPNAVINST 5218.7.*